

General Order

Houston Police Department



ISSUE DATE:

January 18, 2013

NO.

200-27

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 200-27, dated October 31, 2005

SUBJECT: MEAL PERIOD

POLICY

The department shall allow classified employees to take meal periods provided it does not interfere with the delivery of necessary police services to the community.

Employees shall limit meal period locations to within reasonable proximity of their work assignment (district) as pre-determined by the division commander to ensure rapid response to emergencies.

This General Order applies to all classified employees.

1 RESTRICTIONS FOR OFFICERS WEARING THE OFFICIAL UNIFORM OR A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT UNIFORM

Officers assigned to patrol shall not call out of service for a meal period within two hours following the beginning of their shift or be out of service on a meal period within two hours before the end of their scheduled shift without an on-duty supervisor's permission. The on-duty supervisor shall make the decision on a case-by-case basis.

Officers are limited to 40 minutes for a meal period.

At no time shall there be more than two marked police vehicles or no more than four uniformed officers (official uniform or special assignment uniform), regardless of rank, eating at the same food establishment at the same time. It shall be the responsibility of individual officers and department supervisors to ensure this policy is followed.

With a shift commander's permission, the uniformed officer limit of four may be ex-

ceeded due to a special event or circumstance (e.g., banquets, large operations such as SWAT, Vice, and Narcotics teams).

When calling out of service to eat a meal, uniformed on-duty patrol officers shall advise their respective dispatchers of the exact location of the eating establishment and shall seek their dispatcher's approval for the meal period.

If uniformed officers arrive at an eating establishment and find that the number of marked police vehicles would be more than two or the number of uniformed officers in the eating establishment would be more than four, the newly arriving officers shall do either of the following:

- a. If working patrol duty, the newly arrived officers shall immediately notify the dispatcher and go back into service. The officers then may call out of service at a different eating establishment at that time, or with the dispatcher's approval, call out of service at a later time.
- b. If on duty at a fixed-post assignment (e.g., desk officer), the newly arrived officers shall immediately leave the eating establishment, go to another establishment, and comply with the above policy.
- c. If off duty, regardless of assignment, the newly arrived officers shall immediately leave the establishment, and comply with the number of officer and vehicle restrictions stated above.

Upon completion of the meal period, patrol officers shall immediately advise the dispatcher they have returned to service.

The emergency communications dispatcher or a supervisor may pre-empt meal periods due to operational necessity (e.g., response priority code E, 1, or 2 calls for service).

2 PROCEDURES FOR PLAINCLOTHES OFFICERS

Plainclothes officers are not limited to four officers at an eating establishment unless it is obvious to the general public by method

of transportation or circumstance that the officers are on duty.

3 RELATED GENERAL ORDERS

300-15, **Appearance and Grooming Standards-Classified**

400-05, **Firearms Qualification and Control**

400-06, **Carrying Concealed Firearms**

600-22, **Feeding Officers During Emergency Situations**



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